

not be in a position next year to render the Allies such military assistance as to influence a decision.

General Smuts was very insistent on the moral

aspect of the question. He considered that to

relinquish the offensive in the third year of the *General* War would be fatal, and would be

the *Smuts's* view beginning of the end. It would be

impossible to keep up the spirits of the people, and pessimism and despair would be rife among

the Allies, while the Germans would be correspondingly

cheered, and would have time to recover their spirits.

He did not foresee any likelihood of our breaking the

German line, but by remorselessly hammering away

we might expect ultimately to bring the enemy to

terms. If we could not break the enemy's front we

might break his heart. It was hard on us and would

involve heavy casualties, but, though it was a great

misfortune, the Western Front was our problem and

it could only be solved by this policy. For replacing

losses we must rely ultimately on the United States of

America, but to delay action until the United States

could bring their strength to bear, that is to say, until

the year 1918, might be a disastrous policy. Even

if the French refused to take the offensive, we ought

to be prepared to continue, and should insist on the

French taking over the section of the line recently

occupied by us to enable General Nivelle to take the

offensive. Moreover, General Smuts assumed that

the French would not remain entirely
passive in any
case. He considered that from a purely
British point
of view it would be better to attack in
Flanders, where
very important objects of British policy
were to be
achieved, in order to leave to the French
the incentive
to clear the enemy from France, an
incentive which